

OPINION 2225 (Case 3412)***Reticulitermes* Holmgren, 1913 (Insecta, Isoptera) given precedence over *Maresa* Giebel, 1856**

Abstract. The generic name *Reticulitermes* Holmgren, 1913, for an economically important and universally known group of subterranean termites responsible for most economic damage in the Northern Hemisphere, was conserved by being given precedence over *Maresa* Giebel, 1856.

Keywords. Nomenclature; taxonomy; Isoptera; *Reticulitermes*; *Maresa*; *Hemerobites*; *Reticulitermes flavipes*; *Maresa plebeja*; termites; fossil; Baltic amber; Eocene.

Ruling

- (1) Under the plenary power it is hereby ruled that the genus-group name *Reticulitermes* Holmgren, 1913 is to be given precedence over *Maresa* Giebel, 1856 whenever their type species are placed in the same genus-group taxon.
- (2) The following names are placed on the Official List of Generic Names in Zoology:
 - (a) *Reticulitermes* Holmgren, 1913 (gender: masculine), type species by original designation *Termes flavipes* Kollar, 1837, with the endorsement that it is to be given priority over the name *Maresa* Giebel, 1856 whenever their type species are placed in the same genus-group taxon;
 - (b) *Maresa* Giebel, 1856 (gender: feminine), type species by monotypy *Maresa plebeja* Giebel, 1856, with the endorsement that it is not to be given priority over the name *Reticulitermes* Holmgren, 1913 whenever their type species are placed in the same genus-group taxon.
- (3) The following names are placed on the Official List of Specific Names in Zoology:
 - (a) *flavipes* Kollar, 1837, as published in the binomen *Termes flavipes* (specific name of the type species of *Reticulitermes* Holmgren, 1913);
 - (b) *plebeja* Giebel, 1856, as published in the binomen *Maresa plebeja* (specific name of the type species of *Maresa* Giebel, 1856).

History of Case 3412

An application to conserve the usage of the generic name *Reticulitermes* Holmgren, 1913 was received from M.S. Engel (*University of Kansas, Lawrence, KS, U.S.A.*) and K. Krishna (*American Museum of Natural History, New York, NY, U.S.A.*) on 6 February 2007. After correspondence the case was published in BZN 64: 230–234. The title, abstract and keywords of the case were published on the Commission's website. One supportive comment was published in BZN 65: 136.

Decision of the Commission

On 1 September 2008 the members of the Commission were invited to vote on the proposals published in BZN 64: 231–232. At the close of the voting period on 1 December 2008 the votes were as follows:

Affirmative votes – 18: Bogutskaya, Bouchet, Brothers, Fautin, Grygier, Halliday, Kottelat, Krell, Kullander, Lamas, Minelli, Pape, Papp, Patterson, Rosenberg, Štys, van Tol and Zhang.

Negative votes – 2: Alonso-Zarazaga and Lim.

No vote was received from Ng. Pyle was on leave of absence.

Alonso-Zarazaga, voting AGAINST, commented that although he agreed with the general purpose of this Case, several points were still obscure. The reference presented as Anonymous (1833) was attributed to Kollar by Sherborn, it being based on a previous apparent nomen nudum, *Termes floripes* Kollar, 1832 (*Amtlicher Bericht über die Versammlung Deutscher Naturforscher und Aerzte*, 1832, p. 100) that the authors did not mention. Bouchet, voting FOR, said he profoundly disliked these ‘conditional reversals of precedence’ (which, in his view, could lead to nomenclatural instability) but said that the voting paper provided no other choice to conserve *Reticulitermes* as it should. He therefore voted for the conservation of *Reticulitermes*, but disapproved of the technical mechanism employed to achieve this goal. Pape, voting FOR, addressed the question asked by other Commissioners ‘Has *Maresa* been formally synonymised with *Reticulitermes*?’ He said yes, it had, although apparently indirectly. Under Case paragraph 1) it was noted that *Hemerobites antiquus* was transferred to *Reticulitermes* Holmgren by Rosen (1913), and under 4) it was mentioned that ‘*Maresa plebeja* was recognised as a synonym of *Hemerobites antiquus* by Hagen (1858, p. 180)’. From this it followed that *Maresa* (monotypic) is a subjective synonym of *Reticulitermes*. Thus he endorsed protecting *Reticulitermes*.

Original references

The following are the original references to the names placed on Official Lists by the ruling given in the present Opinion:

flavipes, *Termes*, Kollar, 1837, *Naturgeschichte der schädlichen Insekten in Beziehung auf Landwirthschaft und Forstcultur*, & c. viii, Ferdinand Ullrich, Wien, p. 411.

Maresa Giebel, 1856, *Fauna der Vorwelt [vol. 2]: Die Insekten und Spinnen der Vorwelt mit Steter Berücksichtigung der Lebenden Insekten und Spinnen*. xviii, F.U. Brockhaus, Leipzig, p. 298.

plebeja, *Maresa*, Giebel, 1856, *Fauna der Vorwelt [vol. 2]: Die Insekten und Spinnen der Vorwelt mit Steter Berücksichtigung der Lebenden Insekten und Spinnen*. xviii, F.U. Brockhaus, Leipzig, p. 298.

Reticulitermes Holmgren, 1913, *Kungliga Svenska Vetenskaps-Akademiens Handlingar*, **50**(2): 60–61.